

## Two Page Blog Featuring *Wetumpka Widow, Murder for Wealth*

Helen Dunn Frame

What does a mother do when she outlived her only son and an elderly Greek friend insisted his widow may have played a role in his death? Regardless of the truth, when this happened, I wrote a novel incorporating the traumatic event. It was cathartic, helped me to deal with grief, and to come to terms with the loss.

My son died in 2000 after a “minor” operation during which he developed Swiss cheese-like gangrene on the underside of his stomach and infection took control of his entire body. Months later, I began writing the book featuring the same sleuths from *Greek Ghosts* because it would be the second in the series of stories of mystery entwined with romance and human traits.

In 2005 I moved to Costa Rica on my own which caused many people to call me “courageous.” I knew my son would have said, “Go for it, Mom.” After launching my new adventure, writing books and articles and editing others’ creations became my modus operandi. *Wetumpka Widow, Murder for Wealth*, a complicated story told from several viewpoints, evolved into an epic tale fired by greed, manipulation, murder, romance, and sex.

Initially, I wrote a Prologue, a handy tool from my perspective. Later I changed it to the first chapter because some editors poohbah writing one. It introduces the widow’s third husband to hook the reader. Far into the book, the story returns to Markos. By then the reader knows more about why he feared for his life.

As the first in the series began with *Greek Ghosts*, now subtitled *Love and Danger* when I republished it in both paperback and Kindle on Amazon, it became important to keep the Greek influence. The sleuths Jennifer Haslett Vandergriff and Lady Sarah Clarke tackle the complex and twisting plot with passionate enthusiasm, “creating a brilliant story of romance and mystery” to quote a reviewer.

It begins:

“Do you think Joanna has a dark past?” Anastasia Telemachus Leffingwell heard a raspy voice barely above a whisper ask when she answered the phone. Fear grabbed at her heart as if someone had put it in a vice.

“Is that you Markos?” she asked, alarm about to creep into her voice.

He cleared his throat, “Yes.”

“Whatever is the matter?”

“Not over the phone. Will you meet me for lunch?”

“Of course. Where?”

“Spiro’s,” Markos replied without hesitation. “My wife doesn’t know about the restaurant, and I don’t think we’ll see anyone who would recognize us.”

*With this short phone conversation, the reader begins to wonder why Markos is so paranoid and fearful and will read on to discover the reason.*

Anastasia hung up and pulled off the slate-grey jogging outfit she had put on after her shower. She kept on the Victoria’s Secret soft cotton underpants she favored. As she started to slip into a white Fantasie bra, she caught a glimpse of herself in the full-length mirror. She admired how the bra flattered her ample breasts, and how flat—if a bit soft—her stomach remained at her age. She chose a pair of tailored sky-blue slacks and a blue and white print silk blouse that accentuated her slim body. She dashed a brush through her naturally curly, light brown hair that fell into place effortlessly. She passed lipstick over her already painted lips and briefly surveyed the rest of her makeup that she had applied just before her son’s call.

Anastasia grabbed her handbag and car keys and hastened to her red Toyota Corolla. She felt warm as she climbed into the driver’s seat and started the car, sliding back the moon roof. As usual, the sun was bright. The sky was a Robin’s Egg Blue with Cumulus clouds scattered here and there. Normally the fine weather in San Diego lifted her usually high spirits; this Wednesday it did nothing for her. Like a mother hen, she was anxious about her son and failed to notice the beauty.

Anastasia drove to the restaurant and slipped her car into a parking space by the door. She took a deep breath to calm the anxiety she felt as she closed the roof, turned off the ignition, and slid from the driver’s seat. She pressed the remote button that locked all four doors.

*In these three paragraphs, the reader learns about Marcos’s mother who dresses in the Greek colors of blue and white to calm her nerves. He or she will sense Anastasia’s severe anxiety in contrast to a lovely day in San Diego.*

She spied her son’s car across the lot, a deep-blue four-door Jaguar. Although it looked like it was brand new, he had bought it used. At the time he had purchased it, the first of its model, Markos clicked off all its amenities. At the end of his spiel that sounded like a car salesman’s pitch, she understood that the comfortable car impressed their company’s clientele, some of whom he had seen earlier or might meet after lunch. She had to admit she enjoyed riding in it and driving it when he let her.

*Here the reader begins to realize that the family has wealth and a thriving business.*

Markos Aristotle Leffingwell stood in the vestibule as she entered Spiro's. She had suggested to his father that they copy the tradition of her friends who followed Hebraic customs and name him after her father, Michael, using just the first initial. His second name honored her deceased brother Aristotle. Anastasia hugged him tightly, alarmed at how his burnt-almond eyes looked

sunken into their sockets and his brow wrinkled, which made him look ten years older than his thirty-three years. She observed that his thick wavy nut-brown hair looked the same as always; cut short and neatly combed for business.

*The reader now knows how Markos received his name and whom it honored. They view the man through his mother's eyes.*

"Hi, handsome!" She managed to greet him, although she felt nervous as she released him from her arms. "Want to impress the locals, Ari?" she teased, calling him by his nickname, and tilting her head toward his car. Her dad had called his son by that nickname and it warmed her soul to remember her brother in this manner.

"Only clients, Mom." His voice sounded normal as he sighed and smiled somewhat at the jibe. "Thanks for coming."

*The reader senses that mother and son have a close relationship, that family is very important to them. A bit of Marcos's personality shines through his fear. In the following paragraphs, the reader glimpses the mother and son through the eyes of a third person, one sensitive to body language. Slowly Marcos reveals his concerns and fears in the rest of the chapter.*

Bio:



Helen Dunn Frame, an accomplished businesswoman, over the years honed professional writing skills. Living in England, Germany, and Costa Rica; and her love of travel (in 50 countries where she gained an appreciation for diverse cultures) have provided background scenes for books.

Helen first wove many threads of her experiences into the fabric of GREEK GHOSTS, Love and Danger, and later into WETUMPKA WIDOW, Murder for Wealth. Living in Dallas during a major scandal inspired SECRETS BEHIND THE BIG PENCIL. In the third edition of RETIRING IN COSTA RICA OR Doctors, Dogs and

Pura Vida, Helen advises Baby Boomers about planning for retirement, vacationing, or investing in the country. Author's Page: <http://www.amazon.com/Helen-Dunn-Frame/e/B0054LDOBW>

A graduate of Syracuse University (Journalism School), and New York University (Master's Degree in Sociology/Anthropology), major newspapers and magazines as well as trade publications in the United States, Costa Rica, England, and Germany have published her writing. She has edited newsletters, a real estate newspaper, and books by other authors, created business proposals for real estate clients, written articles and columns, and spoken to groups.

*Helen Dunn Frame, whom I had the benefit of having on my writing team at Inkwell Newswatch, and for whom I have consequently had the privilege of proofreading her work, is an enormously talented writer. She's flexible, professional, and very thorough in every writing assignment; whether it was from other sources, her own books, or me. She's definitely a top notch writer with the desire to perform beyond the call of a "normal" writer.* Rowdy Rhodes